2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

342 last longest and are used for more than one house. The tie beam plates (*kathu mbalavu*) and the lower tie beams (*i thoka*) also are reused. So far as the natives know, the oldest beams in the village of Tokalau (fig. 3, house no. 10) are 70 years old. The house itself has been rebuilt. The ages of some houses in the village are recorded in table 1.

The most perishable part of the house is the thatched roof and walls which are repaired or renewed every few years.

The most permanent and important part of the house is the earth mound (*yavu*) on which the house is erected. It is oval in shape, a few centimeters to 2 meters high, and it is faced by a stone wall. Small houses are placed on the ground and are surrounded by an oval ring of stones. A new house is usually built upon an old mound. Vacant mounds in a village resemble vacant lots. In recent years the height of the mound depended on the rank of the owner, but today it depends on his energy and resources. However, the house of a chief always is built on a high mound. In general there is a correlation between the size of the house and the height of the mound.

In old village sites the mounds are not large and high. They are rectangular in shape but usually without definite angles and corner plates. The natives say that in olden days the houses were smaller than they are today and were rectangular in ground plan.

[513 484] Many people had no houses at all but lived in caves. Moto of Undu says that when he was a child he lived with his family in a cave. Today the natives often sleep in caves when they stay over night on uninhabited islands, even when shelters are available.

342 552 The names and locations of the house sites of great ancestors have been handed down from generation to generation and are still known by the natives. With the clan incarnations and titles they are regarded as part of the sacred property of the clan. Mbalavu, the house site of Ndaunisai, is said to be located in Korokoroilulu, a village site above Tokalau. Vatu Soro, the house site of Vuanikathu clan, is located on Ndelaioloi. Today each dwelling house is given a name by the owner or, at the request of the owner, by a visitor from another island. Often a place name is chosen.

Tongan house type

342 [517] The Tongan type of dwelling house (pl. 4, *A*), called *vale vaka Tonga*, is the rule in Lau today. It is similar in important details of structure to the principal Tongan house type described by McKern (18). The framework is rectangular with rounded ends forming an oval ground plan. The gable roof is curved into a gothic arch. The beauty of the house, in the eyes of the natives, lies in its long, curved roof and rounded ends. The most important style point is the roof. To obtain the desired curve the roof is hung from the ridgepole, bowed out by means of roof plates and tie beam plates, and weighed

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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down by means of wall plates. The rounded ends, which are added to the main framework, involve much labor; but they are considered more pleasing than the straight ends of the rectangular house on Viti Levu.

Today a level, open place with a fresh sea breeze is sought for a house site, whereas formerly a man wanted to be near his neighbors. If possible a site is chosen in the hamlet of the man's own clan. If there are no suitable sites in his own clan-hamlet a man asks for a site in the hamlet of his mother (p. 122).

If the owner (*taukei*) is a carpenter (*matai*) he usually does the carpenter's work himself, otherwise he chooses a carpenter from his own village. He makes his request at the carpenter's house without the ceremonial presentation of property. The carpenter is in charge of the house building. Before building starts he consults the owner about every part of the house. The carpenter does the work requiring skill and experience, such as the ornamental lashings, and directs the building operations. The owner supervises the whole process. The natives say they can recognize the style of each carpenter by the proportions and curve of the roof, although carpenters have no specific trade marks. Each carpenter knows a few simple lashing designs. For especially fine lashing a specialist from another village is occasionally employed. A specialist in lashing knows a large number of designs.

Dwelling houses in Tokalau range from small houses like Mburotu (fig. 3, 3) measuring 7 meters long, 4 meters wide, and 5 meters high and built directly on the ground, to large houses like Vale Levu, the house of the chief of Kambara (fig. 3, 1) measuring 12 meters long, 6 meters wide, and 10 meters high, excluding the 1 meter high foundation mound. The largest house in the village besides the mission church is Koro Vou (fig. 3, 26), built as a guest house for visiting chiefs and officials. It is 16 meters long, 7.5 meters wide, and 6.5 meters high, excluding the 60 cm. high foundation mound. The houses in large villages like Nggalinggali on Kambara, Nawatchia on Namuka, Nasau on Mothe, Muanaithake on Fulanga, and Naithulaianga on Ongea average about the same size as the houses in Tokalau. The highest mounds are found in Nasau. In small villages of low rank, like Lomatchi on Kambara, Korotolu on Mothe, and Naivindamu on Fulanga, the houses are smaller.

Before the timber is felled, the owner determines the size of the house by deciding on the dimensions of the rectangular ground plan between the main supporting posts (*nduru*). Although the ground plan of the finished house is oval, the size of the house is measured by the length and width of this inner rectangular ground plan exclusive of the rounded ends and the space between the main supporting posts and the walls. The units of measurement are the fathom and the span. Measuring is done with sennit or vines and marked off with a knife, charcoal, or an imported lead pencil.